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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 21, 1959

SUBJECT: Status of Western Plan for Negotiation on Germany  
and Berlin

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Saul Rae, Minister, Canadian Embassy  
Mr. Foy Kohler, Deputy Assistant Secretary, EUR  
Mr. William N. Dale, Deputy Director, BNA

COPIES TO: EUR (2) (lcc) 1  
GER (2) 2-3  
RA  
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In response to Mr. Rae's inquiry, Mr. Kohler described in general terms the status of progress of the Working Group. In connection with German re-unification, he pointed out that we had amended our proposals to conform more closely with the wishes of the West German Government. On European security, Mr. Kohler mentioned the negative French attitude towards force ceilings; and in connection with Berlin itself, he stressed the desire of the United States to make a positive proposal in contrast to the preference of the other three governments represented on the Working Group to propose only continuance of the status quo.

After inquiring briefly about the timing of the Working Group's report to the NAC, Mr. Rae read the text of the instruction on Berlin which the Canadian Government is sending to its Permanent Representative. The main points were that the Canadians welcome participation by the UN Secretary General at the opening of the Foreign Ministers Conference as they attach great importance to utilizing the UN in connection with a solution of the Berlin problem. In the Canadian view the Secretary General should be asked by the Western Powers "to suggest appropriate channels for consultation with the UN on those aspects of the Conference relating to association of the UN with a Berlin solution". Mr. Rae believed that this reflects the Canadian feeling that the Secretary General should not be confronted at the last minute with proposals for UN involvement but should be consulted about ways and means in advance.

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Mr. Kohler

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-2-

Mr. Kohler said that the Secretary General has been fully consulted by the United States and that his ideas and those of the United States as to a possible UN role are very close together.

In the Canadian view, the Working Group should give serious attention to ways in which the UN could assist in implementing decisions reached by the Big Four. The Canadians also believe that the Working Group should keep in mind the Secretary General's statement concerning a possible UN role and the suggestions made by Mr. Pearkes during the recent NATO meeting.

Mr. Kohler said that the United States has no differences in substance with the Canadians as to the kind of role the UN could play, but Canadian language on the subject seems to us to imply more than we consider desirable or safe. Basically, he added, it has been understood since the San Francisco Conference that the UN should not get mixed up in conflicts between the great powers and that a German settlement is the affair of the Big Four. The United States has, therefore, tried to minimize public reference to the UN, believing any indication that we wished to hand the problem over to the UN would be interpreted as evidence of weakness in Moscow and that if we did unload so explosive a problem on the UN, it would surely wreck the organization. This, of course, we would not want to do. Mr. Kohler referred to recent Gallop Poll results in Germany and the United Kingdom as examples of the type of wishful thinking we are trying to discourage. He expressed hope that the Canadians would not encourage this trend either. He said that the United States was proposing to provide a UN presence in Berlin and perhaps along the access routes too, but we could not recommend giving it executive responsibility or substituting the UN presence for that of the three Western powers. Mr. Kohler explained further that the French oppose a UN role in Berlin, that the Germans tend toward the French position as they fear that the UN would eventually be substituted for the Western presence there, but that the United Kingdom thinks as we do.

Mr. Rae stated the Canadian position is that the UN should have a role in Berlin and on the access routes, that it should not be allowed to become a substitute for the Western presence, and that the UN might usefully verify implementation of the terms of an agreement.

Mr. Kohler again cautioned the Canadians against the dangers of over-playing the UN role in public or against expecting the UN actually to contribute to a settlement. He expressed his belief that the question of a UN role would come out of the Working Group unresolved in view of existing differences among the four countries represented, but stressed that at least there had been agreement as to the UN role in the secretariat for the Foreign Ministers Conference.

In response to Mr. Rae's request whether Mr. Kohler could be more precise as to United States ideas concerning the UN role in Berlin, Mr. Kohler mentioned as possibilities a UN special representative in Berlin to symbolize

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-3-

the UN interest, UN monitoring of free access with a staff in Berlin and on the access routes to verify implementing of an agreement, local assistance by the UN to the interested parties in technical discussions, a UN regional office in Berlin and a possible UN role regarding refugees and propaganda matters.

Mr. Rae said there was a need to bring up to date the old basis on which the Western rights in Berlin now rests and that a UN role would help to accomplish this. He added, however, that this must be done without getting "on the slippery slope".

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